

would you bet your life on it? by queenjameskirk

Category: IT (2017), IT - Stephen King, Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Crossover, Gen, Oneshot

Language: English

Characters: Ben Hanscom, Beverly Marsh, Bill Denbrough, Eddie Kaspbrak, Mike Hanlon, Richie Tozier, Stanley Uris, Will Byers

Status: Completed

Published: 2018-03-14

Updated: 2018-03-14

Packaged: 2022-04-21 15:22:05

Rating: General Audiences

Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply

Chapters: 1

Words: 2,785

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

“Is this Will Byers?” a voice asks on the other line, honey-smooth and familiar.

“Yes,” Will whispers. There’s a peaceful silence for a moment, like time has stopped and the entire world is spinning around Will Byers, phone in hand. And then the voice shatters the peace and Will’s world with a single phrase.

“Will, it’s Mike. Mike Hanlon.”

would you bet your life on it?

*through broke signal like what type of world we wanna live in
do we curl inwards or bend together in forgiveness?
and you said, "do we bend our lives to it, darling?"
then we did*

-intrepid, pinegrove

Will Byers doesn't remember much about Derry, Maine.

It had been more of a rest-stop than a home, he knows that much is certain. He and his mom moved there the summer after Jonathan graduated high school, packing up their station wagon and making the trek across the country together. A change of scenery, she called it, a chance to stretch our legs.

Will knows they were running away. But the bitter bite of cowardice had nothing on the relief he felt seeing Hawkins in the rearview mirror.

Now when he conjures memories of that single school year, his ninth grade year, he only comes up with faint flashes of color. Blue lockers and green grass and a red two-story house next door. He remembers ice-cold water and a rope swing in somebody's backyard and lifting the door of some clubhouse, hidden away from the world.

A honking laugh, a hand clapping his back, a red balloon.

The memories don't gain solidity until Mike Hanlon calls, late late at night.

Will rolls over in bed and picks up the landline, cradling the phone between his shoulder and his ear. His bedroom window is open, fall air blowing in and ruffling the curtains. The sounds of scratching branches and crunching leaves would have scared him a lifetime ago, would have reminded him of an autumn spent in the Upside Down, but now they calm him. He can't sleep in the lonely loud silence of his apartment, he needs a reminder of life outside his own, nature outside his window.

"Hello?" he asks softly, far too tired to speak louder than a whisper.

"Is this Will Byers?" a voice asks on the other line, honey-smooth and familiar.

"Yes," Will whispers. There's a peaceful silence for a moment, like time has stopped and the entire world is spinning around Will Byers, phone in hand. And then the voice shatters the peace and Will's world with a single phrase.

"Will, it's Mike. Mike Hanlon."

"Mike," Will breathes. "Can you believe I'd forgotten all about you?"

He hears Mike sigh on the other end of the line, crackly and distorted from miles of distance. Mike sounds older but still just as warm, a

voice Will remembers from that singular school year spent tucked away in a sleepy Maine town. The fractured memories start to gain a little clarity, get context within his brain. For example, he remembers the tire swing was in Bill Denbrough's back yard, which is a name he wouldn't have been able to conjure up if you asked him for it just moments ago.

"I can believe it, all right," Mike says. Will's mind is racing, repressed memories floating to the surface all at once and it's hard to grab hold of one and right himself. They slip through his fingers, like he's drowning and trying to climb to the surface by grabbing hold of slippery seaweed.

And then one memory sticks out.

He remembers unpacking his room at the house in Derry, an attic bedroom with a small window that looked out across the neighborhood.

He had already filled his bookshelf, breaking down cardboard boxes as he went in order to create some actual floor space in his already small room, and then moved on to hanging and folding his clothes. The closet had a musty sort of smell, like mothballs and dust mixing together and Will cracked the window open in order to air the room out as much as possible.

The sounds of the day drifted in through the open window, the hum of a lawnmower cutting grass down the street and feet slapping on pavement. There was a shout from down below, a sort of yelp, and Will peered over the edge of the windowpane to investigate.

There were two boys across the street, probably a year or so older than him, and they were wrestling in the grass in front of a green bungalow house.

“Get off me, Richie!” the one boy yelled, pushing his friend and trying to roll over on top of him. He looked too small to do any real damage though and Will watched as the other boy, Richie, easily held his arms down with one hand and tickled his stomach with the other.

“Say uncle, Spagheds!” the boy on top shouted, pausing the tickling to push his glasses back up his nose. The brief moment of respite allowed the smaller kid to catch Richie by surprise and knee him in the stomach, forcing him to let out a choked gasp as he collapsed to the side dramatically.

“I’ve been assassinated!” Richie cried, “Killed by my own Eds!”

“You got grass stains all over my shirt, Trashmouth,” the little one whined, pulling the edge of his shirt out to look down at it. Sure enough, it had green smudges all over it that even Will could see from across the road. “Ma’s gonna kill me!”

Richie leaned over and helped to brush a bit of grass out of Eds’ hair and Will suddenly felt like an intruder, like he was watching the private moments of these strangers. It was nothing more than friendly wrestling but it felt like these boys had a bond Will could only dream of.

He suddenly missed his friends back in Hawkins more than he could bear, so much he felt the sadness would fill up his insides and drown him, and Will closed the curtains before it could settle inside him any more. He set

back to unpacking, hearing the sounds of the boys outside drift down the street, carried away by the summer wind.

When he comes back to himself, Mike is continuing on the other line.

“Will, I’m calling you about Derry,” he’s saying, “I’m calling you about It,”

It.

Such a small word to send bone-chilling terror into Will, to inject his blood with ice. He shivers underneath all his blankets, his palm on the phone growing clammy with nervous sweat, and swallows audibly. The trees continue to creak and groan outside his window and Will almost finds them fear-inducing now, almost likens them to the creaking and groaning of bones, brittle and breaking. He has a flash in his mind of It, of Its lair, of Its terror.

“Do you remember Bill?” Mike asks and it feels like he’s constantly changing the subject on purpose, to keep Will on his toes and keep him from spiraling down into a crazed despair, mad over the memories of It. Will latches onto his voice, lets the warmth remind him of the good times and distract him from the bad.

“Of course I remember Bill,” Will answers, thinking of his friend’s blue eyes and stutter. He loved Bill, he remembers, they all did. It was impossible not to fall in love with Bill Denbrough, impossible not to be drawn into his cosmic aura of protectiveness.

Mike chokes out a laugh on the other line, almost as if he's wrapped up in the same memories as Will, remembering being ready and willing to die for Bill Denbrough.

"He's come back to Derry," Mike explains, "I saw him just the other afternoon,"

"You're still in that town?" Will interrupts. He always thought they all were going to go running just like he did, abandoning that haunted town as soon as possible. He remembers Bev did that year, left them for Portland and her aunt. When Will left, so close to the beginning of his sophomore year of high school, they were all chomping at the bit to go. Derry was sucking the life from them, assimilating them to its dark magic.

Stay here forever, it whispered in their ears, Give in.

You'll be happy here.

You'll float.

"Someone had to stay behind," Mike says. "You know that,"

Will knows there were other powers at play, a thrumming energy beneath the earth that he merely joined in on. He wasn't part of the Lucky Seven, his fate wasn't intertwined with theirs, but he wasn't an outsider either. For some reason the fog of Derry didn't work on him like it seemed to with everyone else, didn't pull the wool over his

eyes. At the time he thought it had something to do with his past, was a side-effect of his time in the Upside Down, but now he knows it was because he was Chosen. The Turtle chose him to do good, to protect the Lucky Seven and aid their cause. Will feels honored to have been trusted.

“What’s Bill doing in Derry?” Will asks.

He knows the answer, knows deep down in his bones why Bill followed the siren song back to the town that taught Will the true meaning of evil.

He remembers standing in a circle in the Barrens, his left hand in Eddie’s and his right hand in Mike’s.

The sun shone over them, casting shadows across their features. Will watched as Richie brought his knees to his chest, picking at a scab on his knee. He was leaned into Bill, just slightly, like he couldn’t bear to be apart from him even a few inches. Will knew something changed between them that day in the sewers, something in them grew closer and closer together. He couldn’t help but be a little jealous of their bond, like he always was when he remembered how much the Losers shared without him.

“I can only remember parts,” Bev said, staring at the grass as it bobbed in the wind. Will couldn’t meet her eyes, couldn’t force himself to look at the cut on her cheek and the way her hands shook as she clasped them together in front of her. “But I thought I was dead,”

Will kept his eyes on the ground as she told them of her vision, her now-

memory of them as adults back in Derry, back in Its lair.

“I saw us,” Bev told, looking around the group. Will could feel her eyes on him, boring into his soul, but he couldn’t get himself to look up. Her vision couldn’t have included him, there’s no way his fate could be intertwined with theirs in the same way.

“All of us,” she promised. When Will looked up, she was looking right at him, focused on his face. She looked so much older than the rest of them, so much wiser. It was like the Deadlights changed her, aged her, made her perhaps a little more empty inside. Will hated looking at her now and seeing the effect It had on her, on all of them.

“Swear it,” Bill said, standing and grabbing a broken piece of glass from the ground. Will cut his eyes over to the boy, watching the sun glint off the glass as Bill gestured. “Swear if It isn’t dead-- if It ever comes back, we’ll come back too,”

They looked around at one another, the wind ruffling their hair and stinging their eyes, and they made a promise to themselves. Richie stood up first, Eddie following his lead, and then they were all stood in a circle in the Barrens, pledging their future.

The bottle stung as Bill cut open Will’s palm, dug into his skin and stretched it open. He felt sharper somehow, more awake with the blood running down his palm and between his fingers. He looked at Beverly and she was watching him again, something in her eyes that Will couldn’t place. He kept looking at her as he took Eddie’s hand, wincing as his cut dragged across Mike’s palm.

There was a thrumming energy between all of them, a power being passed through as they bled together. It was hot like fire, electric as he felt his heart beat all the way down to his toes, getting louder and louder. It felt like they were beating together, their hearts in time with one another as they made a promise to return and finish their job.

They stayed together as long as they could stand it, for as much time as they could bear to feel the power, before they broke apart. The summer wind felt chilled when they separated, like the only thing keeping Will warm was the power of the Lucky Seven.

"You were there," Bev told him later, saying goodbye for the last time before she went to Portland. She grabbed his shoulder and made him look her in the eye again. "Grown up just like the rest of us, back in the sewers,"

"Okay, Bev," he said quietly, blinking as she swallowed. He watched her eyes flick between his, searching for something, before she nodded once and then brought him in for a hug.

She was lying. He knew she was lying, was trying to make him feel better by pretending he was there with them all those years from now, but she was wrong. He could tell in her eyes that she was scared of the future, was worried about what awaited them years and years from now, but that she was trying to be strong for all their sake. Will wondered what she really saw in the Deadlights that made her so scared, so desperate to assure Will of his placement in their cosmic group.

Friends don't lie, but Beverly Marsh was lying anyway.

"I love you," she promised, kissing the top of his head.

"I love you too," he said and that was that.

He never saw Beverly Marsh again after that summer.

"He intends to finish what we started," Mike says.

Will can almost feel Mike's hand in his now, warmth spreading from his fingers over his palm and up his arm. He brings his hand up to the light of his bedside lamp, to his face, and expects to see blood in the center of his palm, dripping over the bedsheets. His hand is clean, pale and just a touch age-worn.

He squints and just for a moment, sees a thin white scar. It's as long as the cut Bill made for him, jagged from the blunt bottle tearing his skin instead of slicing it, and it's the first time Will is noticing it for twenty years. He turns his hand over and then back, watching it to make sure the evidence doesn't disappear again.

"Please say you'll come back too," Mike asks. He sounds hesitant, like he's waiting for Will to slam the phone down.

"I--" Will starts. The words clog in his throat and he has to clear it before he can force them out, "I'm not one of you,"

"No," Mike interrupts but Will keeps going, has to say it all now or

he'll never be able to say it again.

"I'm not... one of you. I never was," he whispers. "You have so much power that you can't even see and I'm not a part of that." The scar on his hand feels hot, feels like a fresh wound that's fighting infection, and Will pulls his fingers into a fist to fight the urge to break down.

"I can't help you, Mike, I'm not strong enough," Mike silences on the other line and Will's breath is ragged, loud even over the beating of his heart.

"You were one of us," Mike says finally, the words crackling. Will closes his eyes and tries to sink back into his pillow, tries not to let the words get to him but Mike sounds so earnest and honest. "We loved you like a brother, like one of our own,"

"I'm not strong enough," Will repeats.

"We need you anyway," Mike says and Will knows the decision has been made, was made twenty years ago when he cut his hand and looked into Bill Denbrough's eyes. His fate was decided before he even knew what he was deciding on.

The scar burns as he nods, as he tells Mike he'll be there soon. It aches as he packs his bags and books a flight to Derry first thing in the morning, twinging when he climbs into a towncar outside the airport and riding into the sleepy Maine town he'd forgotten all about.

The scar doesn't stop burning until he's stepping out of a taxi in front of Jade of the Orient, Derry wind prickling his face and smelling like the past. It reminds him of summer and dust and death and Will bites back the sudden fear that crawls up his throat.

He takes a deep breath and goes inside the restaurant, finally ready to face his fate.

Author's Note:

blah blah blah anyway i got a request on tumblr for some ideas of will byers in the It universe. this was supposed to be a very Long fic with a real plot and everything but i currently have zero drive to finish it. however! i did not want to completely scrap the idea so i finished up the first chapter and im posting it here as a oneshot!

thanks for reading and please feel free to visit my on tumblr @cryingbilldenbrough to request a fic of your own!